Segregation in primary schools and the social inequalities in test results in Hungary (2006-2019)

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This paper examines the school performance and segregation of primary school students from different social backgrounds over the 2006-2019 period. Our results show that there has been a significant increase in the inter-school segregation of students in general, and a particularly large increase in segregation took place in the case of students in the bottom income quintile. In the second half of the period, the social inequalities in test results also increased. There is an association between segregation and social inequalities: in the districts and cities where segregation is stronger, the social inequalities of test results are generally larger.

Cloth for wine
Fragments from the history of a "non-trivial but true" economic doctrine

Aladár Madarász

The principle of comparative advantages is a key concept in classical economics, which explains the mutual advantage in international trade. While the theorem is commonly attributed to Ricardo, the question of priority has been debated for over two centuries. In the 20th century, Robert Merton's sociology of science hypothesized about "multiple discoveries", which he considered to be the dominant pattern in scientific research. Some historians of economic thought have identified the principle of comparative advantage as one of the multiple discoveries in economics. This paper examines the texts on trade advantages published by Ricardo and his contemporaries (Robert Torrens, Heinrich von Storch, and an anonymous English pamphleteer) and describes the fluctuating views of Torrens and John Stuart Mill in the first phase of the priority debate. The next section reviews the historiography of the "four magic numbers" in Ricardo's example, which has been debated among historians of economics. Different versions of two basic narratives have been formulated, one accepting Torrens' claim to priority and the other attributing the substantive development of the theory of comparative advantage to Ricardo, but no consensus has been reached.

The metamorphosis of resilience

Olivér Kovács

This paper attempts to answer the question of whether the concept of resilience in economics, which is considered to be systemic, is systemic enough. First, it briefly reviews the dominant economic interpretations of resilience and points out the tacit assumptions of the prevailing understanding that are incompatible with the nature of the real socio-economic system. It then highlights that the inclusion of the dynamic constellation of the large (sub)systems (e.g., the financial sector and the real economy) is essential to understand that, in addition to the restorationist interpretation of resilience known from the mainstream concept, system structuring efforts (i.e., to create a more harmonious relationship between systems) may be needed and, moreover, that their synergistic combination may help to promote the resilience of the system as a whole. The resulting extended theoretical framework is then illustrated on two levels: (i) following the SPIDER approach used in qualitative systemic reviews, it is shown that the resilience-oriented investigations of the mainstream economics literature also suggest that it is worthwhile to address the interaction between the financial sector and the real economy; (ii) this is reinforced by demonstrating the breakdown of the constellation between the financial sector and the real economy. Finally, implications are drawn both for economic theory and economic policy.

Assessing the development and efficiency of public procurement in Hungary

Tünde Tátrai and Péter Juhász

Since 2009, according to market players, the key to increasing the efficiency of Hungarian public procurement has been to improve the public procurement culture and reduce corruption rather than change the relevant regulations. Our questionnaire-based research, which we repeated five times, the key to judging efficiency is the degree of time needed for procedures, the flexibility of public procurement, and the risk for market participants. The market accepts some inefficiency relative to the competitive market by default and participants judge the market's situation against that benchmark as medium. The adequacy of regulation is judged by the participants not against external benchmarks but primarily in the light of the results achieved. The development of the procurement market scores four (medium) on the seven-stage model based on Telgen et al. (2012) where the central issue of the procurement function is shifted to demonstrating that it is doing its job well, meaning it has procured the required items at the best value for money and that there has been no abuse of the process.